JENNIFER VIERECK: Hello, everyone. My name is Jennifer Viereck. I'm the director of HOME, Healing Ourselves and Mother Earth, at the California office, which is in Tecopa, directly downstream from Yucca Mountain.

1 When you start the nuclear fission process, whether in a reactor or in a bomb, you initiate a powerful destabilizing and destructive process which cannot ever be stopped again. It takes up to 250,000 years run to its course creating 80 different highly toxic byproducts. They will take a million years to complete their own decay process. That's what we know so far.

Before you can operate a reactor, an enormous amount of fossil fuel is used in refining and concentrating uranium ore. Even more is used to produce the cement, steel and machinery in the 17 years it takes to build a nuclear reactor. To solve the global warming problem in that way, a new reactor would have to go on line every week for the next 20 years, and that is not going to happen.

Conservation alone could eliminate the 20 percent of electricity we now use from nuclear reactors. In nuclear reactors we do all this to boil water to make steam to turn turbines. There are other ways to do that which do not leave us with a multibillion dollar burden of the most toxic substance we know for the next million years.

Accidents happen. Serious nuclear accidents took place in Japan this year. Chernobyl contamination is still causing problems in northern Europe long after it was predicted. No matter how carefully this process is planned and executed, accidents happen.

Look at our display in the back of the room to see nuclear fuel rods all over the Massachusetts turnpike in 1991. At the WIPP repository for weapons waste in New Mexico, last year alone six trucks came in contaminated from the place of origin affecting everyone along the route. As of Wednesday, WIPP is facing a million dollars in fines for mismanagement in other areas.

Who really pays these fines on top of all the other costs and the health costs for contaminated nuclear workers? We do, the U.S. taxpayers. Do we need a deep geologic repository for the irradiated fuel we already have? Yes, we do. In the long run a deep geologic repository is the safest method we know so far, but Yucca Mountain was disqualified years ago from being a deep geological repository as defined in the Nuclear Waste Policy act. As proposed now, 90 percent of the barriers that contain the waste would be man-made. This system could be built almost anywhere, including under Washington.

Is there a safer alternative for storing irradiated nuclear fuel now? Absolutely. And scientists around the world have been saying so loud

and clear. In the first 50 to 100 years an enormous portion of the radioactive decay will have taken place, leaving mainly plutonium that is deadly and long lasting, but it's a small percent overall.

Storing this material as near to the site of origin as reasonably possible in harden on-site storage facilities for the next 50 years or more would make transportation much, much safer nationwide. It would also allow time for additional research on a true and safe deep geologic repository.

The idea that rushing to consolidate irradiated fuel in one place will make the public safer is a falsehood. Any reactor that continues to operate will generate more irradiated fuel every three months and store it on site anyway. Yucca Mountain would just be a new place. And the entire freeway and rail systems of the U.S., including many major cities, would be routinely exposed to hotter radiation from the transport vehicles even if accidents were not to occur.

I have reviewed these documents to the extent that I can on a laptop. We will be submitting extensive written comments by the deadline. I can see that a lot of careful thought, research and design has gone into every aspect of both the handling facilities and cask and the transportation planning.

All the questions I asked in Amargosa Valley

about containment systems and drainage concerns were answered clearly. However, I finally realized that my discomfort came from the feeling that this is like spending a lot of time discussing frosting recipes to put frosting on a hog. It's still a hog when you're done. Whether we put the parking lot full of fuel too hot to go in the repository to the left or the right of the latest fault line, we're still placing that pad in the third most active earthquake zone in the United States.

All the careful planning that's gone into the TAD canister system is irrelevant to many of the reactor sites since they're not compatible with existing systems. They are also purely hypothetical, exist only on the drawing board and have never been tested.

Whether the rail line costs 2 million or 3 or 10 or 12 down the road will not help the many sites that have no rail spurs and never will. Extensive planning for heavy haul trucks also does not seem to have a lot of practical application.

The overall project continues to rely on other falsehoods of great concern, that the federal government has a legal right to withdrawal of Western Shoshone treaty lands which were ratified by the U.S. Congress long ago, that the state of Nevada can be litigated into providing the water rights, that highly fractured welded tuff is anything like granite, that the Amargosa River watershed is

unimportant or even nonexistent, that the entire region of southeast Inyo County can be written off as a sacrifice zone designated as the nation's nuclear trash can just because it's part of the basin and range closed drainage system.

2 In closing, I would really like to thank the DOE for holding this meeting in Lone Pine, for recognizing the impacts of this project on Californians, and Inyo County in particular. I would also like to present the DOE with a map I promised on Monday illustrating the Amargosa River watershed and Yucca Mountain flow near its apex. I hope that this helps you get the river back on your own maps as well. Thank you all for your time and attention.

J. Viereck - Home

Amargosa River Watershed